

ARTS HOUSE LIMITED
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

AHL was set up in 11 Dec 2002 as a public company under the National Arts Council and was formerly known as The Old Parliament House Limited. It was officially renamed Arts House Limited on 19 Mar 2014. It is registered under the Charities Act on 24 February 2003.

Charity Registration No: 01658

Unique Entity Number (UEN): 200210647W

Registered Address: 1 Old Parliament Lane Singapore 179429

Board of Directors: Gan Christine (Chairman)
Ang Kah Eng Kelvin
Chong Yuan Chien
Deborah Joanne Ho Hyuk Choo
Koh Choon Fah
Lynette Pang Hsu Lyin
Maniza Jumabhoy
Mok Wei Wei
Ong Chao Choon
Tan Chee Meng
Tan Kim Liang Paul
Madeleine Lee Suh Shin
Sarah Binte Mohamed Abdullah Martin

AHL presently has 13 Board members who can identify with, and contribute to, the cause of AHL.

Banker: DBS Bank Ltd
OCBC Ltd

Auditor: Ernst & Young LLP

Management: Sarah Binte Mohamed Abdullah Martin, CEO
Yong Yuet Mei, CFO
None of the above has prior appointment in a charity.

Related Entities: The Company does not have any subsidiary.
Its members are appointed by the National Arts Council.
Board member Mr Tan Kim Liang Paul is the deputy CEO of the National Arts Council.

Objective:

Arts House Limited (AHL) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to enriching lives through the arts. AHL manages two key landmarks located in the heart of Singapore's Civic District -- The Arts House, a multidisciplinary arts centre with a focus on literary programming, and the Victoria Theatre & Victoria Concert Hall, a heritage building that is home to the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. It also runs the Goodman Arts Centre and Aliwal Arts Centre, two creative enclaves for artists, arts groups and creative businesses, and performing arts space Drama Centre. AHL presents the Singapore International Festival of Arts, the annual pinnacle celebration of performance and interdisciplinary arts in Singapore commissioned by the National Arts Council.

Funding Sources:

AHL is financially supported by Government grants, rental income, donations, sponsorships and sales of tickets for its programmes.

Review of Year 2016/2017:

Staffing

As of 31 March 2017, the breakdown of the staff strength is as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| CEO | 1 |
| CFO | 1 |
| Head of Department | 3 |
| Managerial | 21 |
| Executive/Management Support | 8 |
| Non-Executive/Technicians | 10 |
| Total Staff Strength | 44 |

As of 31 March 2017, the annual remuneration of the 3 highest paid staff are as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| \$100,000 - \$200,000 | 1 |
| \$200,000 - \$300,000 | 1 |
| \$300,000 - \$400,000 | 1 |

Key Public Programmes:

THE ARTS HOUSE

Overview

The programming team continued to develop its regular platter of programmes with the inclusion of more photography exhibitions to utilise and promote the potential of the new Gallery I space. *Cita* celebrated its 5th year at The Arts House and the new series *Knowledge Sans Frontières* saw good attendance and positive reviews from its audience. In addition, the programming team worked together on a more targeted focus on literary arts, storytelling, photography and chamber music.

Literary Arts – Highlight Programmes

i *Shakespeare Lives in Film*

Acknowledging the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's passing, The Arts House collaborated with the British Council to present *Shakespeare Lives in Film*. This programme is part of the global *Shakespeare Lives* celebration campaign. Six classic adaptations were screened – *King Lear* (1970), *Theatre of Blood* (1973), *Hamlet* (1955), *Macbeth* (1971), *Othello* (1995) and *All Night Long* (1971). More than 100 people attended the screenings with 74% indicating it was their first visit to the House in the past 12 months. The average satisfaction level was 94%.

ii *Singapore Creative Writing Residency*

The Singapore Creative Writing Residency appointed Gitanjali Kolanad as its 2016 resident. Gitanjali is involved in the practice, performance and teaching of *bharata natyam* for more than forty years, turning to writing as a new way of expressing herself. Her first public appearance in the *World Lit* series on 8 September saw her reading from her first collection of short stories *Sleeping with Movie Stars* as well as from her upcoming first novel. She presented her final showcase marking the end of her six (6) month residency where she had been working on her first novel, *Girl Made of Gold*. The novel explores the world of the devadasi, the hereditary temple dancer, in the 1920s. Kolanad directed a multidisciplinary showcase which featured local Bharata Natyam dancer Katyaini Reddy, local *nattuvanar* (musician and vocalist) Theeban Ganesh, and Kalaripayat artist Hans Wolfgramm from Canada. She wove their performances as responses to her readings of extracts from the new novel sparking the audiences' imaginations and bringing her words to life.

iii *Lidah Aku Punya (This Tongue Is Mine)*

The Arts House commissioned Noor Effendy Ibrahim to curate and produce a ‘live’ poetry performance to celebrate contemporary Malay poetry and poets who play and experiment with the Malay language. To further introduce alternative ways of engaging with the language, local indie band The Psalms and video artist Wu Jun Han collaborated with the poets to create a ‘live’ visceral performance.

iv *Singapore Writers Festival*

The Arts House continued its role as the Key Programme Partner for the Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) 2016. Three (3) events were curated by TAH: the *Shades of Sayang* exhibition, *Secret Sayang Sessions* and *The Whens and Whys of Sayang* lecture by Dr Farish Noor. This was the first time TAH has curated a visual arts exhibition for SWF. Twenty two (22) texts were chosen across the genres of poetry, short stories, novels and plays. Thirteen (13) were in English and three (3) each in Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Each curated text featured characters from various walks of life and in different kinds of relationship, which invoked the spectrum of *sayang* feelings. In addition, the idea of short intimate discussions between one (1) writer and ten (10) participants such as the *Secret Sayang Sessions* was also a first for the Festival. Both the lecture and the *Sessions* received overwhelmingly positive feedback and were all sold out. In particular, the *Sessions* were enjoyed by both audiences as well as the writers.

v *Sing Lit 101: How to read a Singaporean Poem Season 4*

Dr Gwee Li Sui returned for the fourth and final season of *Sing Lit 101: How to Read a Singaporean Poem*. This season covered six (6) poems from the late 1990s. Majority of the poets Dr Gwee featured attended the sessions, which provided participants with a unique opportunity to ask the poets themselves salient questions about their work.

vi *House Party*

The Arts House’s anniversary celebration was renamed as the House Party this year. Local writers, artists and musicians were brought together to share stories that moved them and influenced their work. Audiences were invited to be inspired by the literary arts which were presented in various artistic disciplines. This event was also the first time an outdoor component – Civic District Music@Empress Lawn – was programmed in conjunction thereby bringing the festivities beyond the walls of the house.

Literary Arts – Regular Programmes

i *Silver Writing – Writing My Memoir*

The Arts House’s creative writing programme for seniors, *Silver Writing*, returned with an extended run from eight to ten sessions focusing on memoir writing. This season included a lesson on book binding and digital recording. In addition, graduates from the programme were invited to perform readings of their work as part of the *Silver Arts Festival* in Toa Payoh Library on 17 September.

ii *Cita Seni*

Cita returns for the 5th year with a new direction to look more deeply into national and regional artistic, cultural and intellectual traditions. The first session on 16 April featured poet and artist Suraidi Sipan who discussed his passion for sketching and poetry as well as his observation on the link between painters and poets. The second session in August exhibited over 20 sketches by Dr Ho Chee Lick on life in void decks. This was coupled with a lecture by Dr Suriani Suratman on the politics of space. *Cita Seni* sessions are usually conducted in English. However, the session in February was conducted in Malay as it looked more closely at how sex is portrayed and written about in classical Malay literature. As these texts have not yet been translated, it did not allow for discussion in English.

iii *World Lit Workshops – Miguel Syjuco*

World Lit invited novelist and journalist Miguel Syjuco to give three unique workshops in April. *Architecting a Novel* helped aspiring novelists with the scaffolding needed to build a novel; *Uncensoring the Self* encouraged writers to look at censorship closely, be it forced upon by an institution or by oneself; and *Carpe Diem: Writing our Manifestos and Obituaries* looked at 150 years of manifestos to understand how the form evolved from the political to the artistic, the socially engaged to the personal or corporate.

iv *World Lit – Nicholson Baker*

World Lit featured the outgoing NTU-NAC Creative Writing Resident Nicholson Baker, known as a writer of various genres from novels to essays. In this evening session, Baker shared on how he saved a singular collection of rare 20th century newspapers from being destroyed. The collection now rests at Duke University.

v *International Writers Series*

This is the revamped *World Lit*, which will continue to present international writers with a focus on writers whose work has a specific theme that provokes thought and discussion. Burmese poet ko ko thett as well as American writer Marina Budhos were presented. ko ko thett spoke on the current political climate in Myanmar and how his poetry is used as a way to translate the experience between the personal and the political. Budhos spoke on

migrants and how damaging the use of rhetoric such as ‘us’ and ‘them can do to a community.

vi *The Alphabet Series – Letter V & W is for Vaughan Williams*

This concert celebrated the works of one of England’s most important composers, Ralph Vaughan Williams, with three of his greatest song cycles – *On Wenlock Edge*, *Songs of Travel* and the *Ten Blake Songs*.

GOODMAN ARTS CENTRE

Overview

Goodman Place Management Office (PMO) continued to work closely with stakeholders, tenants and community partners to reach out to the public. Programmes initiated by Goodman PMO or in collaboration with tenants and/or partners include *The 20-Something Theatre Festival* and *Tanjong Goodman Weekend Market*.

Key Programme Highlights

i *The Great Singapore Garage Sale*

The Great Singapore Garage Sale is a community event bringing together pre-loved goods by 40 vendors at a bargain price. It featured a smorgasbord of clothes, toys, furniture, ornaments and electronic goods, giving GAC tenant-artists an opportunity to sell their works as well. This May edition of the Great Singapore Garage Sales brought in 1,500 visitors.

ii *The 20-Something Theatre Festival*

Goodman Arts Centre partnered Tan Kheng Hua who produced a new boutique theatre festival celebrating the creative spirit and voice of twenty-something theatre-makers in Singapore. The festival received funding from the National Arts Council and saw eight brand new plays totaling 34 ticketed performances from young playwrights. Throughout the festival’s duration, some 3,000 visitors came to enjoy the performances and took part in the InstaGala Concert and Flea Market that accompanied it.

iii *Tanjong Goodman Weekend Market #1*

Over 7,500 parents packed their kids and grabbed their friends to *Tanjong Goodman Weekend Market* held within the lush compound of Goodman Arts Centre. Spread across the 7-acre Centre grounds were an artisan flea market by Togetherly at the new Block O, *The Great Singapore Garage Sale #7* at the Multi-Purpose Hall and a Food Bazaar cum Bric-a-Brac Fair at the Amphitheatre by Ascent Events Management Group. Tenant La

Barca Ristorante participated with a BBQ, water slide and bouncy castle for young families. In addition, GAC PMO invited the Very Special Arts Singapore Ltd (VSA) to join in as part of its outreach efforts.

In total, 115 vendors spread themselves across the Centre with GAC PMO providing technical, logistical and marketing support. Media continued to be helpful in publicising the event with features in The Straits Times and TODAY. The biggest reward for GAC PMO was the crowd of families of diverse nationalities coming together under one roof, with the survey results showing 52% of respondents finding the overall quality of the programme 'Excellent'.

iv *Field Vibes - SG51 Edition*

The third edition of the popular Goodman Arts Centre and Café Melba collaboration *Field Vibes* was held on 9 August to celebrate Singapore's 51st Birthday with 'live' music by rising star Ffion, the Lower Eastside all-star DJs, a collectibles and lifestyle market by The Bigfatlucha, and an Aussie BBQ. Held on the open field between Café Melba and the new Block O, this family-friendly-chill-out-picnic-party drew 1,200 visitors.

v *Tanjong Goodman Weekend Market #2*

With similar programming format from the first edition in July, the August edition added an Eco-Friendly Lifestyle Market on top of the existing arts flea market, garage sale and food bazaar, bringing the total number of vendors to 135. With a National Day theme, the Weekend Market partnered People's Association Youth Movement (PAYM) from Joo Chiat to assist with the marketing of the programme to nearby CCs. GAC PMO also included the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) Singapore as the outreach element for this edition. Unfortunately, the haze from Indonesia blew past the night before, and the event saw a drop in number of visitors to just 3,000.

vi *Got To Move @ Tanjong Goodman*

GTM @ Tanjong Goodman saw all seven dance tenants at Goodman Arts Centre, along with a total of 114 performers and artists, open their doors for a fun-filled day of dance. A total of 2,500 visitors got to experience a whole range of dance genres through a total of 17 free classes, workshops and performances.

vii *Tanjong Goodman Open House 2017*

The sixth edition of the *Tanjong Goodman Open House* saw close to 40 artists and arts groups present over 100 arts activities, including parent-child workshops, dance performances, and an Open Studio Visual Arts tour. The event drew over 3,000 visitors and will continue to be a staple programme at Goodman Arts Centre.

ALIWAL ARTS CENTRE

Overview

Aliwal Arts Centre Place Management Office (AAC PMO) headed the entire programming of the Aliwal Urban Art Festival (AliwalAUAF) for the first time, as opposed to appointing an events organiser or programme partner to do so. This year's AliwalUAF saw the highest visitor numbers for the festival. A new exhibition - *No Regrets For Our Youth* by Singapore artist collective - was also commissioned in conjunction with the festival.

The popular exhibition *Cannot Be Bo(a)rdered*, first commissioned for Aliwal Urban Art Festival in January 2016 was brought to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the *Urbanscapes Festival* and to Paris, for the *Urban Art Fair* with participation by eight French artists.

Key Programme Highlights

i Serentak by NADI Singapura

The first drumming concert by NADI that is set to be an annual affair, *Serentak* presented seven musicians/percussionists with varying abilities, attributes and experience performing original compositions for Malay drums and percussion.

ii Aliwal Arts Night Crawl

The 4th edition of the *Aliwal Arts Night Crawl* celebrated the traditional sarong with a tighter programme that included a trail of three batik institutions in Kampong Gelam led by AHL CEO Lee Chor Lin. Almost 80% of Aliwal tenants took part in the Festival, presenting performances and workshops scattered around the Centre and businesses within Kampong Gelam. This year also marked the first partnership with the Malay Heritage Centre, who held their annual *Hari Raya Open House* on the same evening.

iii Pathey Nimidam – 10 Minute Tamil Play Fest by Ravindran Drama Group

Six Singapore theatre companies (including English companies) presented six 10-minute plays in Tamil with English surtitles. *Pathey Nimidam* is an annual play festival by Ravindran Drama Group.

iv DanzINC Festival by Odyssey Dance Theatre

DanzINC – International Dancers & Choreographers' Residency Festival is a biennial festival that gathers creative artistes from all over the world to promote international cross-cultural exchanges via contemporary dance. Odyssey Dance Theatre presented workshops and performances by choreographers from Taiwan, Germany and Korea over three weekends.

v *Aliwal Presents*

Aliwal Presents is a new monthly ‘live’ music series that features the varied genres of music available in Singapore, spanning time, language and culture. The debut on 17 August was curated by artist and musician Yuen Chee Wai, Co-Project Director of the Asian Music Network. Yuen presented the first Asian Meeting Sessions, a collaborative performance by experimental sound artists from Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan and Singapore. In September, *Aliwal Presents* featured three emerging bands from the *Noise Singapore Music Mentorship Programme* by NAC.

vi *Escape 56 by BLACKOUT*

Escape 56 marked the first event at Aliwal Arts Centre that ran till 4am. Guests were treated to screenings of short films by Singaporean filmmakers before chilling to good music by veteran local DJs.

vii *Operacalypse Now!! by L’Arietta Productions*

Organised by L’arietta Productions, a Singapore-based chamber opera company, this part-romance, part-horror musical showcase was a tongue-in-cheek take on Romeo & Juliet featuring zombies, classic opera characters and an apocalypse.

viii *Projek Suitcase*

This edition of the annual Projek Suitcase saw 16 established artists from the theatre industry presenting eight 20-minute plays in Malay, based on the theme ‘metamorphosis’. Equipped with only a suitcase, the storytellers spun their tales in various spaces within Aliwal Arts Centre.

ix *Nam Hwa Blazes by Nam Hwa Opera Limited*

Introducing the beauty of traditional Teochew Opera to the community, the final edition of *Nam Hwa Blazes* for 2016 included excerpts of famous performances along with performances by the students from Nam Hwa Teochew Classical Songs Class.

x *Aliwal Urban Art Festival*

The fourth edition of Aliwal Urban Art Festival was the first edition fully programmed by Aliwal Arts Centre, and featured a wider variety of interactive programmes, and subcultural genres. Over 5,800 people attended the event, that included a street art tour by Aliwal tenants and pioneer street art collective RSCLS, performances by Singapore bands and DJs, a skateboarding competition, as well as a market of Singapore artisanal brands.

xi *No Regrets for Our Youth by DXXXXD*

No Regrets For Our Youth is the second commissioned exhibition by Aliwal Arts Centre, for Singapore Art Week. Singapore art collective DXXXXD created an artistic urban gymnasium that confronted gym culture and its influence in personal as well as “tribe” image and association, having risen in popularity to become a bona fide urban sub-culture. The exhibition drew over 1,500 visitors in its month-long run, and was featured in several international publications.

xii *CabaRed by New Opera Singapore*

Aliwal tenant New Opera Singapore presented a special cabaret performance about love, passion and longing that featured both local and international singers from the company.

SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS

Diversity was once again the hallmark of SIFA in 2016. One of the biggest draws was *Ron Arad 720°* video installation in The Meadow@Gardens by the Bay from 2 to 17 September, coinciding with the Garden’s Mid-Autumn Festival light-up and drawing 80,000 attendees.

SIFA 2016, together with its pre-festival of ideas – The O.P.E.N. – attracted in total some 155,000 attendees. It featured 20 productions – 15 were new creations of which 8 involved Singaporean and International collaborations, a feat that brought SIFA into International attention, both amongst festival producers and the International press including The Guardian and Wallpaper. Productions featured included *Hamlet | Collage* by iconic creator Robert Lepage; *Five Easy Pieces* by Milo Rau; *In The Mood For Frankie* by Trajal Harrell; *Making And Doing* by Bill T. Jones; and a South East Asian Retrospective by acclaimed Indonesian dancer and choreographer Sardono W. Kusumo. Works such as Fernando Rubio’s *Everything By My Side* and *Time Between Us* involved Singapore artists Margaret Chan and Oliver Chong respectively. Other works which featured Singapore artists included *Sandaime Richard* (Janice Koh) and *Ron Arad’s 720°* with Brian Gothong Tan’s multi-media work *Tropical Traumas: A Series Of Cinematographic Choreographies*.

Based on initiatives put in place since 2014 to further engage and enhance the experience of festival-goers, SIFA 2016 offered 43 events in The O.P.E.N. (Open, Participate, Engage, Negotiate), the pre-festival of ideas that connected audiences with the over-arching theme of SIFA 2016 – ‘POTENTIALITIES’. For the edition in 2016, SIFA introduced a one-pass entry to all The O.P.E.N. events, with single entry tickets to some events at \$10, eg. *Club Malam*, a photographic exhibition by Newsha Tavakolian, and O.P.E.N. Salon. In this 17-day event, The O.P.E.N. screened films in The Projector and for the first time, at Capitol Theatre. The Capitol Theatre screening featured a special closing film by Italian film-maker Gianfranco Rosi with its Golden Bear winning film *Fire At Sea*.

Over 16,500 people (an increase of 100% attendance from 2014) from different cross-sections

of society attended this year's public engagement initiative with over-subscribed O.P.E.N. passes and the highly popular single-entry tickets.

In addition, four SIFA Shares were offered. These connected audiences with the thinking and deeper insight into the Festival artists' work such as *Five Easy Pieces* by Milo Rau where two of his films and a talk by dramaturg Stefan Bläske were featured; an exhibition and performance *The Kula Ring: Aesthetic Considerations Of Sharing And Exchange*; the *Kabuki Demonstration: The Art of the Onnagata*; and *In Conversation with Ron Arad*.

SIFA 2016 saw an increased level of interest amongst various members of arts festivals and presenting institutions from around the world. There were 43 International visitors from various Festivals such as the New Zealand Festival, the Holland Festival and SPIELART Festival (Germany) as well as arts institution like Mandiri Art (Indonesia), Thong Lor Art Space (Thailand) and Kaohsiung National Performing Arts Centre (Taipei) coming to examine and enjoy its strong curation of programmes, proving that SIFA has started to carve out a unique presence and visibility within the region.

Fundraising Plans for the following financial year:

Organisations and individuals who believe and give to Arts House Ltd (AHL) form an important pillar of support for the Company. AHL is grateful to the generous sponsors and donors who have supported various programmes presented by AHL and its centres, through cash donations and in-kind contributions. Additionally, AHL would like to extend its appreciation to the National Arts Council (NAC) for its enthusiastic confidence and assistance.

In its next phase of growth, AHL will strategically solicit for donations and support from corporations, individuals and foundations. Through such concerted efforts, AHL aims to grow a steady pool of long term partners who are closely connected to AHL's aspirations and goals.

Financials:

The Company recorded a surplus of \$332,713 in the financial year ended 31 March 2017.

Total expenditures including building rental is \$20,136,478, supported by income of \$7,303,368 and grants of \$13,165,823. Reserves at \$7,578,026 is 38% of total expenditures.

Reserve Policy:

Any annual surpluses or prior years' reserves within the General Funds shall form the Operating Reserve and shall not be reduced except in accordance with the reserve policy as authorized by the Board, which dictates its use, authorisation, reporting and monitoring.

Future Plans and Commitments:

THE ARTS HOUSE

- i *StoryFest: International Storytelling Festival Singapore*
- ii *Prelude*
- iii *Bach Continuum*
- iv *Cita Seni*
- v *Poetry and Music*

GOODMAN ARTS CENTRE

- i *Tanjong Goodman Open House*

ALIWAL ARTS CENTRE

- i *Aliwal Arts Night Crawl 2017*
- ii *Uban Art Fair, Paris 2017*

VICTORIA THEATRE & CONCERT HALL, DRAMA CENTRE, and STAMFORD ARTS CENTRE

AHL will take over the management of Victoria Theatre & Victoria Concert Hall as well as Drama Centre from 1 August 2017. AHL will also be managing Stamford Arts Centre upon its Temporary Occupation Permit (TOP) expected in February / March 2018.

SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS

The focus of the SIFA 2017 season will return to spotlight on Singapore artists and ordinary Singaporeans. The theme for 2017's season is Enchantment, continuing from the journey from the past (2014 – Legacies) to the present (2015 – Post-Empires) to the future (2016 - Potentialities). 2017 continues to see SIFA moving towards a 'creations' festival, where there are 16 Commissions from Singapore artists as well as international artists. This continues to create a unique identity for the festival moving ahead. It is the festival's intention to invest, support and develop artistes.